DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 358 082 SP 034 565

TITLE	The American Teacher, 1993. Teachers Respond to President Clinton's Education Proposals. The Metropolitan Life Survey.
INSTITUTION	Harris (Louis) and Associates, Inc., New York, N.Y.
SPONS AGENCY	Metropolitan Life Insurance Co., New York, N.Y.
PUB DATE	93
NOTE	43p.
AVAILABLE FROM	MetLife, The American Teacher Survey, P.O. Box 807, Madison Square Station, New York, NY 10159-0807.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Tests/Evaluation Instruments (160)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Educational Improvement; *Educational Policy; Elementary School Teachers; Elementary Secondary Education; Federal Government; *Government Role; Government School Relationship; National Surveys; Parent School Relationship; Participative Decision Making; Policy Formation; Politics of Education; *Public Policy; *Public School Teachers; Secondary School Teachers; *Teacher Attitudes; Teacher Influence; Teacher Participation
IDENTIFIERS	*Clinton Administration; *Presidential Initiatives; Reform Efforts

ABSTRACT

This survey, based on interviews with a national sample of 1,000 public school teachers, focuses on American teachers' reaction to President Clinton's education proposals put forward during his campaign for the presidency. In order not to bias responses to the survey, no reference was made to President Clinton before or during the interview. Teachers were asked whether government can play a significant role in improving education, what the federal government's priorities should be, and what level(s) of government should have authority in the education decision making process. Results suggest: widespread support among teachers for most of the President's proposals; about two-thirds of America's public school teachers believe the federal government can play an important role in improving the country's educational system; a high level of willingness to engage in further reform of public education in the areas of governance, accountability, teacher training, school-based social services, and links between education and employment; and concerns about the preparedness of students and strengthening parents' roles in their children's education. Eighteen tables are included. A detailed account of the survey methodology and the survey questionnaire showing marginal frequencies for all questions are appended. (LL)

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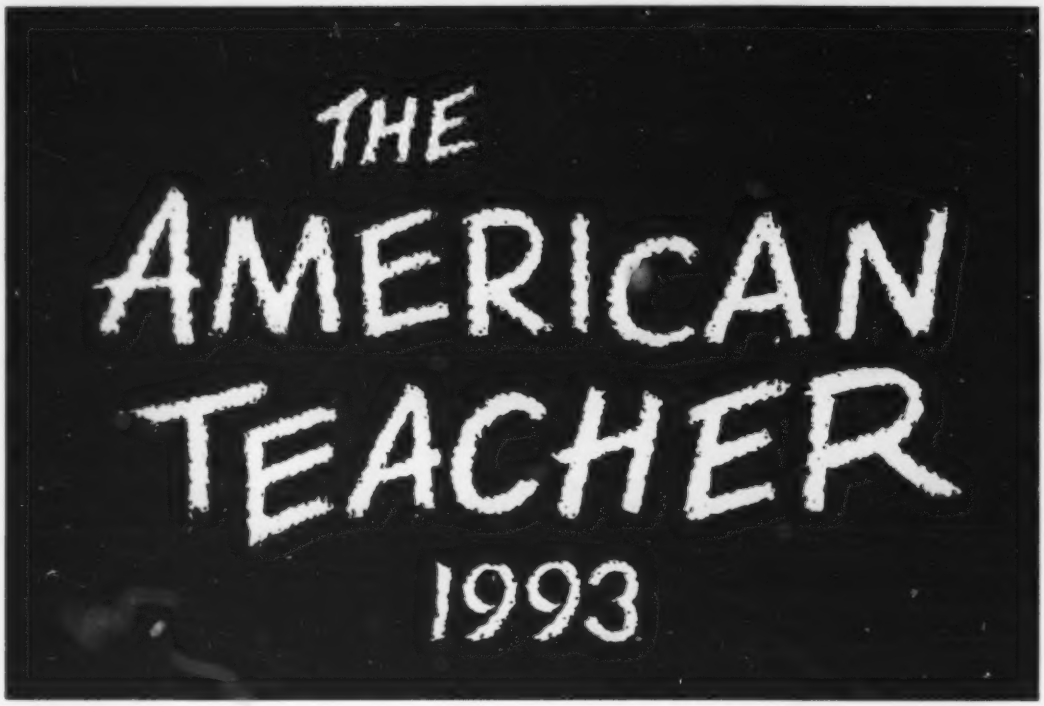

Teachers Respond To President Clinton's Education Proposals

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This report is part of a series of surveys that explores teachers' opinions and brings them to the attention of the American public and policymakers.

- *The Metropolitan Life Survey of the American Teacher, 1984* analyzes attitudes of elementary and secondary school teachers toward both public education in the United States and educational reform.

- *The Metropolitan Life Survey of the American Teacher, 1985: Strengthening the Profession* examines teachers' own agenda for educational reform.

- *The Metropolitan Life Survey of the American Teacher, 1986: Restructuring the Teaching Profession* explores the current structure of the teaching profession, and ways to restructure it.

- *The Metropolitan Life Survey of Former Teachers in America, 1986* reflects the views of those who left the teaching profession for other occupations.

- *The Metropolitan Life Survey of the American Teacher, 1987: Strengthening Links Between Home and School* includes the views of parents of America's schoolchildren, and reveals how parents and teachers are united in their commitment to educating America's youth.

- *The Metropolitan Life Survey of the American Teacher, 1988: Strengthening the Relationship Between Teachers and Students* includes the views of students in grades 4-12, and also focuses on minority teachers' satisfaction with teaching and ways to increase their participation in the profession.

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The series also includes several reports on individual states – two surveys of California teachers and one of New York teachers – whose questions parallel the 1984 and 1985 nationwide studies.

The Metropolitan Life Survey of

THE AMERICAN TEACHER 1993

Teachers Respond To President Clinton's Education Proposals

Conducted for
Metropolitan Life Insurance Company
by
Louis Harris and Associates, Inc.

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Fieldwork: January 25 – February 8, 1993

FOREWORD FROM METLIFE

In 1984 MetLife asked Louis Harris and Associates to elicit the concerns and aspirations of teachers so that their voices could be included in the national debate on school reform. For nine years the MetLife surveys have given policymakers, national education groups, school administrators, and the general public first-hand facts concerning what teachers think is important to them, their students, their classrooms, and their schools.

The new administration in Washington has expressed strong interest in improving the educational system. This newest survey tells us what America's teachers think about President Clinton's proposals to get young people ready for school and for the world of work. Teachers provide valuable insight into what needs to be done to make our schools safe and productive places for learning; the importance of involving parents in the education process; and how strong a role the federal government should play in reforming the country's educational structure.

The Metropolitan Life Survey of the American Teacher continues to reflect MetLife's commitment to public schools by providing teachers with a platform to express their opinions on the restructuring of our nation's schools, and on ways to improve education.

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INTRODUCTION

This is the latest in a series of surveys sponsored by MetLife that focuses on the opinions and experiences of the American teacher. It represents a sustained program of research designed to bring teachers' opinion to the attention of the education community and the American public.

The focus of this year's survey is teachers' response to President Clinton's proposals for public education as defined during his campaign for the presidency. It should be noted that, in order to not bias the responses to the survey, no reference was made to President Clinton before or during the interview. In this survey, teachers tell us whether government can play a significant role in improving public education, what should be priorities for the federal government, and what level(s) of government should have authority in the education decision-making process.

The Survey Design

This survey is based on interviews with a nationally representative sample of 1,000 teachers. All interviewing was done from January 25 through February 8, 1993. Every public school teacher, from kindergarten through grade 12, had an equal chance of being drawn into the sample. A detailed survey methodology is provided in Appendix A. The survey questionnaire showing the marginal frequencies for all questions appears in Appendix B.

A Note on Reading the Tables

An asterisk (*) on a table signifies a value of less than one-half percent (0.5%). A dash (-) represents a value of zero. Percentages may not always add to 100% because of computer rounding, multiple answers from respondents, or the elimination of "no answers" from particular tables.

Public Release of Survey Findings

All Louis Harris and Associates surveys are designed to adhere to the code of standards of the Council of American Survey Research Organizations (CASRO) and the code of the National Council of Public Polls (NCPP). Because data from this survey will be released to the public, any release must stipulate that the complete report is also available, rather than simply an excerpt from the survey findings.

Project Responsibility

The directors of this project at Louis Harris and Associates were Robert Leitman, Senior Vice President, and Lucy Santana, Research Associate.

Louis Harris and Associates gratefully acknowledges the contributions of our colleagues at MetLife to this project. However, responsibility for the survey questions, the findings, and their interpretation rests solely with Louis Harris and Associates.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report focuses on American teachers' reaction to President Clinton's education proposals put forward during his campaign for the presidency.

There is widespread support among teachers for most of the President's proposals. Further, about two-thirds of America's public school teachers believe the federal government can play an important role in improving the country's educational system.

The results of this survey confirm and build upon earlier surveys in the MetLife American Teacher survey series. For most of the 1980s this series reported teachers' acceptance of educational reform. This survey confirms a high level of willingness to engage in further reform of public education, in the areas of governance, accountability, teacher training, school-based social services, and links between education and employment.

The most recent surveys in the American teacher series have reported the high level of teacher concern about the preparedness of their students and the support of parents. When forced to choose their highest priority for federal educational policy, a majority of teachers name strengthening parents' roles in their children's education.

Highlights

1. *Large majorities of teachers [working at all levels, locations, regions, and mixes of students] are in favor of establishing standards for students.*
   - Teachers give their strongest support to requiring eighth graders to pass an exam to go on to high school, and
   - Establishing national standards for what students should know.
   - Support is prevalent but less strong for creating a national examination system to measure students' and schools' progress in meeting national standards.
2. *Contrary to the President's campaign proposal, close to two-thirds (64%) of teachers support having a policy mandate requiring* substantive subjects taught in English, and only one-third say government should promote bilingual education programs of the type supported by the President.
3. *Teachers are split (49% - 49%) with regard to whether they themselves should also be required to periodically take a basic competency test to keep their jobs.*
4. *Fully 73% of teachers support expanding alternative certification methods for people who want to take up teaching as a second career.*
5. *Over two-thirds of teachers believe that there should be differential pay to attract and retain teachers who work in urban schools (72%) or schools in iso-*

lated or rural areas (72%). Most teachers also believe that there should be differential pay for those who teach math and science (61%).

6. *Close to half of all teachers (47%) strongly support increasing Federal Chapter One funding aimed at improving the basic academic skills of low-income students.*

   - Teachers overwhelmingly (93%) believe that the most effective way of using these funds would be to give local schools flexibility in determining their use.

7. *Most teachers (57%) think that the amount of decision-making power the local schools (i.e., principals, teachers, and parents) have is too little relative to the power at the federal, state, and local school board levels.*

   - Teachers in inner city and urban school districts and those teaching higher proportions of minority and lower-income students have the highest proportions who believe that too little power is vested at the local school level.

8. *Majorities of teachers think that four out of five of President Clinton's campaign proposals for promoting school safety should be among the government's highest priorities in education.*

   - Close to three-quarters (74%) of teachers think the federal government, working with state and local governments, must support drug education and prevention programs as one of its highest priorities in education.
   - Nearly two-thirds (63%) of teachers think government should support drug intervention and treatment programs as one of its highest priorities.
   - For both proposals relating to the drug problem, support is high among all groups of teachers, regardless of the level or location of school or the ethnicity or income of their students.
   - Fully 60% of teachers think the federal government should consider putting more police officers on the streets in high-crime areas where schools are located.
   - A majority of 54% of teachers think the government should hire more security personnel at violence-ridden schools.

9. *Teachers believe programs promoting and supporting learning and parental involvement in their child's academic growth should be given highest priority by the federal government.*

   - Fully 69% of teachers believe that one of the federal government's highest priorities should be programs helping disadvantaged parents work with their children to encourage learning.
   - 61% say fully funding Head Start should be among the federal government's highest priorities in education.

10. *Teachers respond very differently to two different mechanisms aimed at holding parents accountable.*

    - An overwhelming 86% of teachers think that parents should be penalized through fines or some other mechanism if they allow their child to be chronically truant.
    - Only 42% think that parents should be penalized if they refuse to attend a parent-teacher conference and 57% oppose this.

11. *More than two-thirds of teachers strongly support three of four proposals put forward by President Clinton during his election campaign to address the problems of students in higher grades.*

    - The proposal that receives the most strong support (74%) is creating a college loan program which those who borrow pay back either with a percentage of their income or through community service.
    - Fully 69% of teachers strongly support developing a national apprenticeship program for noncollege bound students with the promise of good jobs when they graduate and establishing a Youth Opportunity Corp for teenage dropouts aimed at providing practical skills to make them more employable.

12. *About two out of three teachers (63%) believe that the federal government can play an important role in improving the country's educational system; 36% believe the federal government is too distant to be very helpful.*

    - A majority of teachers (54%) say the highest priority in public education policy in the next few years should be strengthening parents' roles in their children's education.
    - Teachers' choice for second highest priority is improving and expanding early childhood education programs including Head Start for preschool children.
    - Lower, in comparison to other proposed policies, is establishing tough standards and improving safety in and near schools.

1. Establishing Standards

➤ *"Given that we now have a goal of learning on the part of all students, rather than merely 'offering instruction,' the standards [for teachers] have to rise. We aren't going to be able to achieve our goals if we only prepare teachers to cover the book."*

From an interview with Ann Bradley, *Education Week*, February 10, 1993.

Linda Darling-Hammond, Co-director, National Center for Restructuring Education, Schools, and Teaching at Teachers College, Columbia University

Standards for Students

Large majorities of teachers [working at all levels, locations, regions, and mixes of students] are in favor of establishing standards for students. Teachers give their strongest support to requiring eighth graders to pass an exam to go on to high school (80% support, including 42% who strongly support it), and establishing national standards for what students should know (81% support, including 40% who strongly support the proposal). Support is prevalent but less strong for creating a national examination system to measure students' and schools' progress in meeting national standards — 61% support this but only 17% offer strong support (Table 1-1).

Teachers are mixed in their views about where standards for students should be set, with a plurality (39%) saying local communities should set standards, 36% saying they should be set by the states, and 23% preferring nationally set standards (Table 1-2).

Bilingual Education

The Clinton-Gore plan for education put forward during the presidential campaign supports bilingual education programs that teach English and teach other substantive subjects in a child's native language. Close to two-thirds (64%) of teachers support a different approach — having a policy mandate requiring substantive subjects be taught in English, with one-third saying government should promote bilingual education programs of the type supported by the President. Support for teaching substantive subjects in English is strongest among high school teachers (Table 1-3).

Standards and Recruitment and Retention of Teachers

Teachers are split (49% - 49%) with regard to whether they themselves should also be required to periodically take a basic competency test to keep their jobs. Teachers with less than ten years of experience support this proposal more than do teachers with more experience (Table 1-4).

Fully 73% of teachers support expanding alternative certification methods for people who want to take up teaching as a second career, including 28% who think use of these methods should be greatly expanded. Support for alternative certification of teachers is stronger in the earlier grades than it is among high school teachers (Table 1-5).

Over two-thirds of teachers believe that there should be differential pay to attract and retain teachers who work in urban schools (72%) or schools in isolated or rural areas (72%). Most teachers also believe that there should be differential pay for those who teach math and science (61%) (Table 1-6).

Table 1-1

SUPPORT FOR STUDENT STANDARDS

QUESTION: *I am going to read you some proposals for improving public education in the United States. For each, please tell me if you strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose the proposal.*

	STRONGLY SUPPORT	SOMEWHAT SUPPORT	SOMEWHAT OPPOSE	STRONGLY OPPOSE	NOT SURE
Base: 1000	PERCENTAGE				
Require eighth graders to pass an exam to go on to high school	42	38	11	8	1
Establish national standards for what students should know	40	41	12	7	*
Create a national examination system to measure students' and schools' progress in meeting national standards	17	44	20	18	*

*Less than 0.5%

Table 1-2

WHO SHOULD SET STUDENT STANDARDS?

QUESTION: *In general, do you think standards for what children should know are best set nationally, by the states, or by local communities?*

	TOTAL
BASE	1000
	PERCENTAGE
Nationally	23
By the States	36
By the Local Communities	39
Not Sure	1

Table 1-3

BILINGUAL VS. ALL-ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROGRAMS

QUESTION: ***There has been some controversy about educational methods for students whose native language is not English. Do you think government policy should promote bilingual education programs that teach English and teach other substantive subjects in a child's native language, or should policy mandate that substantive subjects be taught in English?***

		SCHOOL LEVEL		
	TOTAL	ELEMENTARY	JUNIOR OR MIDDLE	HIGH SCHOOL
BASE	1000	438	220	[redacted]
	PERCENTAGE			
Government should promote teaching substantive subjects in native language	34	37	38	[redacted]
Substantive subjects should be taught in English	64	61	61	
Not sure	2	2	1	

Table 1-4

SUPPORT FOR TEACHERS COMPETENCY TESTS

QUESTION: ***Do you think teachers should be required to take a basic competency test to keep their jobs, or not?***

		YEARS TEACHING					
	TOTAL	LESS THAN 5	5 – 9	10 – 14	15 – 19	20 – 25	26 AND OVER
BASE	1000	64	153	141	203	270	168
	PERCENTAGE						
Yes	49	68	61	38	44	51	45
No	49	30	37	61	55	47	54
Not sure	1	2	2	1	1	2	1

Table 1-5

ALTERNATIVE CERTIFICATION METHODS

QUESTION: *Many ways to attract and retain good teachers have been tried in different locations. Do you think alternative certification methods for people who want to take up teaching as a second career should be greatly expanded, expanded a little, or not expanded at all?*

		SCHOOL LEVEL		
	TOTAL	ELEMENTARY	JUNIOR OR MIDDLE	HIGH SCHOOL
BASE	1000	438	220	[redacted]
	PERCENTAGE			
Greatly Expanded	28	31	34	[redacted]
Expanded A Little	45	45	40	
Not Expanded At All	25	21	24	
Not Sure	2	2	2	

Table 1-6

SUPPORT FOR DIFFERENTIAL PAY

QUESTION: *Do you strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose differential pay to attract and retain teachers in shortage areas such as:*

	STRONGLY SUPPORT	SOMEWHAT SUPPORT	SOMEWHAT OPPOSE	STRONGLY OPPOSE	NOT SURE
Base: 1000	PERCENTAGE				
Urban schools	32	40	13	14	1
Schools in isolated or rural areas	31	41	13	13	1
Math and science	27	34	17	21	1

➤ *"I want everybody to look down the street and see that school building and say, 'That's ours. We are responsible for it.' "*

As reported in *"From Risk to Renewal" Education Week*, February 24, 1993.

The Honorable Roy Romer
Governor of Colorado

Chapter One Funding

Close to half of all teachers (47%) *strongly* support increasing Federal Chapter One funding aimed at improving the basic academic skills of low-income students — another 35% somewhat support increasing funding and only 19% oppose it. Support is strongest among teachers with all or many minority or lower-income students and teachers in elementary and middle schools (Table 2-1). Teachers overwhelmingly (93%) believe that the most effective way of using these funds would be to give local schools flexibility in determining their use (Table 2-2).

Decentralizing the Decision-Making Process

Most teachers (57%) think that the amount of decision-making power the local schools (i.e. principals, teachers, and parents) have is too little relative to the power at the federal, state, and local school board levels. Another 38% think local schools have the right amount of decision-making power and only 5% think they have too much. Teachers in inner city and urban school districts and those teaching higher proportions of minority and lower-income students have the highest proportions who believe that too little power is vested at the local school level (Table 2-3).

A 57% majority of teachers believe that parents and students now have about the right amount of choice of the public schools they attend. However, a substantial 38% think that parents and students should have more choice while only 4% think they should have less choice. Teachers with more minority and lower-income students believe that students and their parents should have more choice (Table 2-4).

Table 2-1

SUPPORT FOR INCREASING CHAPTER ONE FUNDING

QUESTION: *Another proposal is to increase Federal Chapter One Funding aimed at improving the basic academic skills of low-income students. Do you strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose increasing this funding?*

		SCHOOL LEVEL			MINORITY STUDENTS			LOWER INCOME STUDENTS		
	TOTAL	ELEMENTARY	JUNIOR OR MIDDLE	HIGH SCHOOL	ALL OR MANY	SOME	FEW OR NONE	ALL OR MANY	SOME	FEW OR NONE
BASE	1000	438	220	319	313	252	434	478	361	153
	PERCENTAGE									
Strongly Support	47	51	51	36	52	43	44	51	44	40
Somewhat Support	35	32	31	42	30	36	37	30	37	42
Somewhat Oppose	13	10	13	16	10	15	13	13	14	13
Strongly Oppose	7	7	4	6	5	6	6	6	4	5
Not Sure	*	–	–	1	*	*	*	*	1	–

*Less than 0.5%

Table 2-2

WHO SHOULD DETERMINE HOW FUNDS ARE SPENT?

QUESTION: *Do you think that federal funds for low-income students would be used more effectively if the ways they are spent are determined by the federal government, or would it be better if the local schools had more flexibility?*

	TOTAL
BASE	1000
	PERCENTAGE
Determined by Federal Government	6
Local Schools had Flexibility	93
Not Sure	1

Table 2-3

Appropriateness of School-Based Decision-Making Authority

QUESTION: *Some people are concerned about the decision-making powers that reside at the federal, state, and local school boards as opposed to at the school level. In general, do you think the amount of decision making power the local schools have is about right, too much, or too little?*

		SCHOOL LOCATION					MINORITY STUDENTS			LOWER INCOME STUDENTS		
	TOTAL	INNER CITY	URBAN	SUB-URBAN	SMALL TOWN	RURAL	ALL OR MANY	SOME	FEW OR NONE	ALL OR MANY	SOME	FEW OR NONE
BASE	1000	123	105	258	308	205	313	252	434	478	361	153
	PERCENTAGE											
About Right	38	30	24	39	40	45	30	36	45	34	41	44
Too Much	5	3	3	5	8	3	5	4	5	6	5	3
Too Little	57	66	71	55	52	51	64	59	49	60	54	53
Not Sure	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*

*Less than 0.5%

Table 2-4

Choice of Schools by Parents and Students

QUESTION: *Do you think parents and students now have about the right amount of choice of the public schools they attend, or should they have more choice or less choice?*

		MINORITY STUDENTS			LOWER INCOME STUDENTS		
	TOTAL	ALL OR MANY	SOME	FEW OR NONE	ALL OR MANY	SOME	FEW OR NONE
BASE	1000	313	252	434	478	361	153
	PERCENTAGE						
Right Amount of Choice	57	45	62	63	53	63	56
More Choice	38	47	35	33	42	33	36
Less Choice	4	7	3	3	4	4	5
Not Sure	1	2	*	1	1	*	3

*Less than 0.5%

3. School Safety

Majorities of teachers think that four out of five of President Clinton's campaign proposals for promoting school safety should be among the government's highest priorities in education. The two with the greatest support are related to illegal drugs.

Close to three-quarters (74%) of teachers think the federal government, working with state and local governments, must support drug education and prevention programs as one of its highest priorities in education. Nearly two-thirds (63%) of teachers think government should support drug intervention and treatment programs as one of its highest priorities. For both proposals relating to the drug problem, support is high among all groups of teachers, regardless of the level or location of school or the ethnicity or income of their students (Table 3-1).

Fully 60% of teachers think the federal government should consider putting more police officers on the streets in high-crime areas where schools are located. Higher proportions of teachers who are black and who work with all or many minority students think this should be a high priority (Table 3-2). A majority of 54% of teachers think the government should hire more security personnel at violence-ridden schools. Both of these proposals are supported by a majority of all types of teachers.

A significant minority of teachers believe that purchasing metal detectors for violence-ridden schools should be a high priority of the government.

OBSERVATION: ***The questions about each of these proposals put investments in school safety explicitly in the context of scarce resources and competing priorities in education. Nonetheless, only between 4% and 16% say that any of the proposals is one that the federal government, working with state and local government, should not spend resources on. This suggests the pervasive level of concern about safety in and around schools.***

➤ *"America has become a dangerous place for children. The violence we see on the news and in our neighborhoods has spilled over into the one place above all others where children should be safe — our schools."*

Excerpt from statement: *Violence in the Schools*, January 14, 1993.

Keith Geiger, President
National Education Association

Table 3-1

PRIORTIES FOR SCHOOL SAFETY

QUESTION: ***Many people are concerned about the general safety in and around schools. Given that there are scarce resources, do you think that the following is something the federal government, working with state and local governments, must do as one of its highest priorities in education, should do but as a lower priority, or should not spend resources on?***

	MUST DO	LOWER PRIORITY	SHOULD NOT SPEND RESOURCES	NOT SURE
Base: 1000	PERCENTAGE			
Supporting drug education and prevention programs	74	22	4	
Supporting drug intervention and treatment programs	63	31	5	
Putting more police officers on the streets in high-crime areas where schools are located	60	33	6	
Hiring more security personnel at violence-ridden schools	54	34	10	
Purchasing metal detectors for violence-ridden schools	42	41	16	

*Less than 0.5%

Table 3-2

SUPPORT FOR PUTTING MORE POLICE OFFICERS ON THE STREETS IN HIGH-CRIME AREAS WHERE SCHOOLS ARE LOCATED

QUESTION: ***Many people are concerned about the general safety in and around schools. Given that there are scarce resources, do you think that putting more police officers on the streets in high crime areas where schools are located is something the federal government, working with state and local governments, must do as one of its highest priorities in education, should do but as a lower priority, or should not spend resources on?***

		MINORITY STUDENTS			TEACHER ETHNICITY		
	TOTAL	ALL OR MANY	SOME	FEW OR NONE	WHITE	BLACK	HISPANIC
BASE	1000	313	252	434	914	58	29
	PERCENTAGE						
Must Do	60	65	56	58	59	69	52
Lower Priority	33	29	35	35	33	27	41
Should Not Spend Resources	6	5	8	6	6	–	7
Not Sure	1	1	2	1	1	3	–

4. Early Childhood and Parental Involvement

A growing body of educational literature defines parental involvement as critical in order to encourage children to learn. Teachers believe programs promoting and supporting learning and parental involvement in their child's academic growth should be given highest priority by the federal government. Fully 69% of teachers believe that one of the federal government's highest priorities should be programs helping disadvantaged parents work with their children to encourage learning, and 61% say fully funding Head Start should be among the federal government's highest priorities in education (Table 4-1). Strongest support for helping parents work with their children comes from black teachers and those who teach in inner cities and elementary schools (Table 4-2).

Teachers respond very differently to two different mechanisms aimed at holding parents accountable. An overwhelming 86% of teachers think that parents should be penalized through fines or some other mechanism if they allow their child to be chronically truant. However, only 42% think that parents should be penalized if they refuse to attend a parent-teacher conference and 57% oppose this (Table 4-3).

➤ *"Overwhelmingly, parents want to do right by their children. The problem is that in our fast-paced world, mothers and fathers find it difficult to spend time with their children, to talk with them at leisure, to help expand their world. In too many homes, parents are more distracted than engaged."*

***Ready to Learn: A Mandate for the Nation* – (1991)**

Ernest L. Boyer, President
The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching

Table 4-1

PRIORITIES FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD AND PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

QUESTION: ***One approach to more successful public education is to help students begin their formal schooling well prepared to learn. Should the federal government make the following one of its highest priorities in education, a lower priority to pursue if funds can be made available, or should no additional resources be spent on it?***

	HIGHEST PRIORITY	LOWER PRIORITY	NO NEW RESOURCES	NOT SURE
Base: 1000	PERCENTAGE			
Programs helping disadvantaged parents work with their children to encourage learning	69	27	4	*
Fully funding Head Start	61	29	8	1

*Less than 0.5%

Table 4-2

SUPPORT FOR PROGRAMS TO HELP INCREASE PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

QUESTION: ***One approach to more successful public education is to help students begin their formal schooling well prepared to learn. Should the federal government make programs helping disadvantaged parents work with their children to encourage learning one of its highest priorities in education, a lower priority to pursue if funds can be made available, or should no additional resources be spent on it?***

		SCHOOL LEVEL	SCHOOL LOCATION	TEACHER ETHNICITY		
	TOTAL	ELEMENTARY	INNER CITY	WHITE	BLACK	HISPANIC
BASE	1000	438	123	914	58	29
	PERCENTAGE					
Highest Priority	69	75	82	67	88	72
Lower Priority	27	22	14	29	7	25
No New Resources	4	3	4	4	5	3
Not Sure	*	*	1	1	–	–

*Less than 0.5%

Table 4-3

SUPPORT FOR HOLDING PARENTS ACCOUNTABLE

QUESTION: ***Do you think parents should be penalized through fines or some other mechanism if they (READ EACH ITEM), or not?***

	YES, PENALIZE PARENTS	NO, DON'T	NOT SURE
Base: 1000	PERCENTAGE		
Allow their children to be chronically truant	86		
Refuse to attend a parent-teacher conference	42		

*Less than 0.5%

THE AMERICAN TEACHER

5. Alternative Education Programs

More than two-thirds of teachers strongly support three of four proposals put forward by President Clinton during his election campaign to address the problems of students in higher grades.

The proposal that receives the most strong support (74%) is creating a college loan program which those who borrow pay back either with a percentage of their income or through community service. Another 22% somewhat support this proposal and virtually no teachers (only 3%) oppose it.

Fully 69% of teachers strongly support developing a national apprenticeship program for non-college bound students with the promise of good jobs when they graduate and establishing a Youth Opportunity Corps for teenage drop-outs aimed at providing practical skills to make them more employable. Support for all three proposals is very strong across all teacher groups and opposition is almost non-existent.

Teachers are far less supportive of revoking the driver's licenses of students who drop out of school without an approved reason. A still substantial 45% strongly support this proposal and another 27% somewhat support it. However, 27% oppose it, including 14% who strongly oppose it (Table 5-1).

➤ *"We have to recognize that all of our high school graduates need some further education in order to be competitive in this global economy. So we have to establish a partnership between businesses and education and the government for apprenticeship programs in every state in this country to give our people the skills they need."*

Excerpt from February 17, 1993 address to a joint session of Congress.

President Bill Clinton

Table 5-1

SUPPORT FOR ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAMS

QUESTION: ***Another set of proposals has been put forward to try to address the problems of students in higher grades. For each of these proposals, please tell me whether you strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose each proposal?***

	STRONGLY SUPPORT	SOMEWHAT SUPPORT	SOMEWHAT OPPOSE	STRONGLY OPPOSE	NOT SURE
Base: 1000	PERCENTAGE				
Create a college loan program which those who borrow pay back either with a percentage of their income or through community service	74	22	2		*
Develop a national apprenticeship program for non-college bound students with the promise of good jobs when they graduate	69	25	3		*
Establish a youth opportunities corps for teenage drop-outs aimed at providing practical skills to make them more employable	69	24	3		*
Revoke the driver's licenses of students who dropout of school without an approved reason	45	27	13		1

*Less than 0.5%

6. Priorities

About two out of three teachers (63%) believe that the federal government can play an important role in improving the country's educational system; 36% believe the federal government is too distant to be very helpful (Table 6-1).

Given the widespread support among teachers for most of the educational proposals put forward by President Clinton during his campaign for the presidency and the budgetary problems faced by all levels of government, priorities will need to be set.

When asked to choose between strengthening parents' roles in their children's education, improving early childhood education programs, establishing tough standards and improving safety in and near schools, teachers strongly favor two choices. Most favored by far is strengthening parents' roles in their children's education, named as highest priority by 54% and second highest by 26% — a net of fully 80% who choose this as first or second highest priority.

The second highest priority, according to teachers, should be improving and expanding early childhood education programs including Head Start for pre-school children, named as highest priority by 26% and second highest by 35%, or a net of 61% ranking it first or second. Falling as much lower priorities are establishing tough standards (a net of 34% naming it as either first or second), and improving safety in and near schools (named by only 24% as either first or second top priority) (Table 6-2).

OBSERVATION: ***Recent surveys of both new and experienced teachers in the MetLife American Teacher series have demonstrated the depth of concern teachers have about such things as the lack of support or help from parents, their unsatisfactory experiences working with parents, and the lack of preparedness of children to learn. These concerns appear to be reflected in teachers' highest priorities for educational policy.***

Table 6-1

CAN THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

QUESTION: *On the whole, do you think the federal government can play an important role in improving the country's educational system, or do you think it is too distant to be very helpful?*

	TOTAL
BASE	1000
	PERCENTAGE
Yes, Play an Important Role	63
No, Too Distant	36
Not Sure	1

Table 6-2

HIGHEST PRIORITIES FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION POLICY

QUESTION: *If you had to pick one of the following as the area that should be given the highest priority or second highest priority in public education policy in the next few years, which would it be?*

Base: 1000	HIGHEST PRIORITY	2ND HIGHEST PRIORITY	NET 1ST & 2ND HIGHEST PRIORITY
	PERCENTAGE		
Strengthening parents' roles in their children's education	54	26	80
Improving and expanding early childhood education programs including Head Start for pre-school children	26	35	61
Establishing tough standards	12	22	34
Improving safety in and near schools	8	16	24
Not sure	1	1	

Appendix A:
METHODOLOGY

The Teachers' Sample

The 1993 Metropolitan Life Survey of the American Teacher was conducted by Louis Harris and Associates for Metropolitan Life Insurance Company during January and February, 1993. A total of 1,000 telephone interviews were conducted with current public school teachers in kindergarten through grade 12 throughout all states of the U.S. and the District of Columbia. Table A-1 describes the demographic characteristics of the teachers.

Sample Selection of Teachers

Louis Harris and Associates drew a random sample of current teachers from a list of 1.2 million teachers compiled by Market Data Retrieval of Westport, Connecticut. Sample sizes for complete interviews were set for each state, based on statistics of public school teachers in each state published by the U.S. National Center for Education Statistics.

Interviewing Procedures for Teachers

Each selected teacher was contacted at his or her school by telephone, and requested to participate in the survey. The message included a toll-free number to allow a return call.

Before being asked to complete the actual interview, each teacher was screened to ensure that he or she currently teaches in an elementary or secondary level public school and teaches at least part-time in the classroom. Once a respondent passed the screen, an appointment was made to telephone at a convenient time and place to complete the interview.

Processing the Data

All completed questionnaires were edited, coded, key-punched, and verified. The data were tabulated, checked for internal consistency, and processed by computer. The output of this process is a series of computer tables showing the results for each survey question, both by the total number of respondents interviewed and by important subgroups.

Sample Disposition and Completion Rates for Teachers

The sample disposition for this survey is shown in Table A-2. A total of 4,753 contacts at school were made to yield 1,000 completed interviews with teachers. The interview completion rate for teachers was 80%.

Weighting of the Teachers' Sample

The achieved sample of teachers was weighted to the latest, best available parameter for race. Weighting by race adjusts this key variable, where necessary, to the actual proportions in the population.

Table A-1

DISTRIBUTION OF THE SAMPLE OF TEACHERS

	UNWEIGHTED	WEIGHTED
BASE	1000	1000
	NUMBER	
Sex:		
Male	330	326
Female	670	674
Experience in Teaching:		
Less than 5 Years	64	62
5 - 9 Years	153	151
10 - 19 Years	344	349
20 Years or More	438	437
Type of School:		
Elementary	438	446
Junior High/Middle School	220	216
High School	319	315
Both Junior & High School	23	22
Race:		
White	914	879
Black	58	83
Hispanic	29	32
Asian	6	9
School Location:		
Inner City	123	134
Urban	105	103
Suburban	258	255
Small Town	308	304
Rural	205	204

Table A-2 DISPOSITION OF THE TEACHERS' SAMPLE

	TOTAL
A. Completed Interviews	1,000
B. Nonworking Number, Wrong Number, No New Number	18
C. No Longer There, Retired, Deceased, On Leave	474
D. No Answer or Busy (After Four Callbacks)	58
E. Refused Interview	175
F. Noneligible Respondent (Screened Out or Quoted Out)	104
G. Never Returned Call After Message Left at School	2,345
H. To Call Back (Study Completed Before Callback Was Needed)	25
I. Language Barrier	0
J. Terminated Within Interview	0
K. Not Available During Duration of Field Period	46
L. Returned Call But Not Needed by Close of Field Period	508
TOTAL NUMBER OF CONTACTS	4,753

$$\text{Interview Completion Rate} = \frac{A}{A + E + H + J + K} = \frac{1{,}000}{1{,}246} = 80\%$$

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Sampling Error

The results achieved from national public cross-sections are subject to sampling error. Sampling error is defined as the difference between the results obtained from the sample and those that would have been obtained had the entire population been surveyed. The size of sampling error varies both with the size of the sample and with the percentage giving a particular answer. The following table sets forth the range of error in samples of different sizes at different percentages of response:

Table A-3

APPROXIMATE SAMPLING TOLERANCES (AT 95% CONFIDENCE) TO USE IN EVALUATING PERCENTAGE RESULTS APPEARING IN THIS REPORT

NUMBER OF PEOPLE ASKED QUESTION ON WHICH SURVEY RESULT IS BASED	SURVEY PERCENTAGE RESULT AT 10% OR 90%	SURVEY PERCENTAGE RESULT AT 20% OR 80%	SURVEY PERCENTAGE RESULT AT 30% OR 70%	SURVEY PERCENTAGE RESULT AT 40% OR 60%	SURVEY PERCENTAGE RESULT AT 50%
1,000	2	2	3	3	3
900	2	3	3	3	3
800	2	3	3	3	3
700	2	3	3	4	4
600	2	3	4	4	4
500	3	4	4	4	4
400	3	4	4	5	5
300	3	5	5	6	6
200	4	6	6	7	7
100	6	8	9	10	10
50	8	11	13	14	14

For example, if the response for a sample size of 1,000 is 30%, in 95 cases out of 100 the responses in the total population would be between 27% and 33%.

Note that survey results based on subgroups of small size can be subject to large sampling error.

The recommended allowances for sampling error were calculated based on a simple random sample.

Appendix B:
THE QUESTIONNAIRE

LOUIS HARRIS AND ASSOCIATES
630 Fifth Avenue
New York, New York 10111

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY:

Questionnaire No.: _____
1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5

Study No. 922022 (Teachers)
(8-13)

January 26, 1993

CARD NUMBER (6-7)

Sample Point No.: |_|_|_|_|_|_|_|_|
2* 24 - 25 - 26 - 27 - 28 - 29 - 30

Time Started: _____ **A.M./P.M.**

Interviewer: _____ **Date:** _____

Area Code: _____ **Telephone No.:** _____
2* (9-11) 2* (12-28)

Hello, I'm _____from Louis Harris and Associates, the national survey research firm in New York. We are conducting a national survey among teachers to learn some of their opinions and attitudes about the American educational system, and would like to ask you a few questions.

Continue...(14 (__-1

INTERVIEWER: READ, IF NECESSARY

Sponsor of the Study and Its Purpose:

The sponsor of this study is Metropolitan Life Insurance Company. MetLife and Louis Harris and Associates have conducted annual surveys of school teachers for the past nine years. The highly publicized series of survey reports, called *The Metropolitan Life Survey of the American Teacher* have tracked changes in teachers' opinions and needs, and have provided valuable information for both policymakers and the general public.

1. Do you teach in an elementary school, a junior high or middle school, or a high school?

Elementary school (Grades K-5 or 6)	(15 (	45-1
Junior high/middle school (Grades 6 or 7 – 8 or 9)		22-2
High school (Grades 9-12 or 10-12)		32-3
Both junior high and high school		2-4
Not sure		=-5

2. Thinking about the public school in which you teach, how would you rate the quality of education in your school – excellent, good, only fair, or poor?

Excellent	(16 (	44-1
Good		49-2
Only fair		7-3
Poor		*-4
Not sure		=-5

A. Establishing Standards

A1. I am going to read you some proposals for improving public education in the United States. For each please tell me if you strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose the proposal. *(READ EACH ITEM)*

ROTATE—START AT "X"	Strongly Support	Somewhat Support	Somewhat Oppose	Strongly Oppose	Not Sure
( ) a. Establish national standards for what students should know	(17 (40-1	41-2	12-3	7-4	*-5
( ) b. Create a national examination system to measure students' and schools' progress in meeting national standards	(18 (17-1	44-2	20-3	18-4	*-5
( ) c. Require eighth graders to pass an exam to go on to high school	(19 (42-1	38-2	11-3	8-4	1-5

A2. In general, do you think standards for what children should know are best set nationally, by the states, or by local communities?

Nationally	(20 (	23-1
By the states		36-2
By the local communities		39-3
Not sure		1-4

A3. Do you think teachers should be required to take a basic competency test to keep their jobs, or not?

Yes	(21 (	49-1
No		49-2
Not sure		1-3

B. Reforming Our Schools

B1. Another proposal is to increase Federal Chapter One funding aimed at improving the basic academic skills of low-income students. Do you strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose increasing this funding?

Strongly support	(22 (	47-1
Somewhat support		35-2
Strongly oppose		13-3
Somewhat oppose		6-4
Not sure		*-5

B2. Do you think that federal funds for low-income students would be used more effectively if the ways they are spent are determined by the federal government, or would it be better if the local schools had more flexibility?

Determined by federal government	(23 (	6-1
Local schools had flexibility		93-2
Not sure		1-3

B3. Some people are concerned about the decision-making powers that reside at the federal, state and local school boards as opposed to at the school level. In general, do you think the amount of decision-making power the local schools have is about right, too much, or too little? *(IF NECESSARY: The local schools means the principals, teachers, and parents.)*

About right	(24 (	38-1
Too much		5-2
Too little		57-3
Not sure		*-4

B4. Do you think parents and students now have about the right amount of choice of the public schools they attend, or should they have more choice or less choice?

Right amount of choice	(25 (	57-1
More choice		38-2
Less choice		4-3
Not sure		1-4

B5. Many ways to attract and retain good teachers have been tried in different locations. Do you think alternative certification methods for people who want to take up teaching as a second career should be greatly expanded, expanded a little, or not expanded at all?

Greatly expanded	(26 (	28-1
Expanded a little		45-2
Not expanded at all		25-3
Not sure		2-4

B6. Do you strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose differential pay to attract and retain teachers in shortage areas such as *(READ EACH ITEM)*?

ROTATE—START AT "X"	Strongly Support	Somewhat Support	Somewhat Oppose	Strongly Oppose	Not Sure
( ) a. Math and science	(27 (27-1	34-2	17-3	21-4	1-5
( ) b. Urban schools	(28 (32-1	40-2	13-3	14-4	1-5
( ) c. Schools in isolated or rural areas	(29 (31-1	41-2	13-3	14-4	1-5

B7. There has been some controversy about educational methods for students whose native language is not English. Do you think government policy should promote bilingual education programs that teach English and teach other substantive subjects in a child's native language, or should policy mandate that substantive subjects be taught in English?

Government should promote teaching substantive subjects in native language	(30 (	34-1
Substantive subjects should be taught in English		64-2
Not sure		2-3

C. School Safety

C1. Many people are concerned about the general safety in and around schools. Given that there are scarce resources, do you think that *(READ EACH ITEM)* is something the federal government working with state and local governments must do as one of its highest priorities in education, should do but as a lower priority, or should not spend resources on?

ROTATE—START AT "X"		Must Do	Lower Priority	Should Not Spend Resources	Not Sure
( ) a. Hiring more security personnel at violence-ridden schools	(31 (	54-1	34-2	10-3	1-4
( ) b. Purchasing metal detectors for violence-ridden schools	(32 (	42-1	41-2	16-3	1-4
( ) c. Putting more police officers on the streets in high-crine areas where schools are located	(33 (	60-1	33-2	6-3	1-4
( ) d. Supporting drug education and prevention programs	(34 (	74-1	22-2	4-3	*-4
( ) e. Supporting drug intervention and treatment programs	(35 (	63-1	31-2	5-3	1-4

D. Early Childhood and Parental Involvement

D1. One approach to more successful public education is to help students begin their formal schooling well prepared to learn. Should the federal government make *(READ EACH ITEM)* one of its highest priorities in education, a lower priority to pursue if funds can be made available, or should no additional resources be spent on it?

ROTATE—START AT "X"		Highest Priority	Lowest Priority	No New Resources	Not Sure
( ) a. Fully funding Head Start	(36 (	61-1	29-2	8-3	1-4
( ) b. Programs helping disadvantaged parents work with their children to encourage learning	(37 (	69-1	27-2	4-3	*-4

D2. Do you think parents should be penalized through fines or some other mechanism if they *(READ EACH ITEM)*, or not?

ROTATE—START AT "X"		Yes, Penalize Parents	No, Don't	Not Sure
( ) a. Refuse to attend a parent-teacher conference	(38	(42-1	57-2	1-3
( ) b. Allow their children to be chronically truant	(39	(86-1	13-2	1-3

E. Alternative Education Programs

E1. Another set of proposals has been put forward to try to address the problems of students in higher grades. For each of these proposals please tell me whether you strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose each proposal?

ROTATE—START AT "X"		Strongly Support	Somewhat Support	Somewhat Oppose	Strongly Oppose	Not Sure
( ) a. Establish a Youth Opportunities Corps for teenage drop-outs aimed at providing practical skills to make them employable	(40	(69-1	24-2	3-3	2-4	*-5
( ) b. Develop a national apprenticeship program for noncollege-bound students with the promise of good jobs when they graduate	(41	(69-1	25-2	3-3	3-4	*-5
( ) c. Create a college loan program which those who borrow pay back either with a percentage of their income or through community service	(42	(74-1	22-2	2-3	1-4	*-5
( ) d. Revoke the driver's licenses of students who drop out of school without an approved reason	(43	(45-1	27-2	13-3	14-4	1-5

G. Priorities

G1. If you had to pick *one* of the following as the area that should be given the highest priority in public education policy in the next few years, which would it be? Would it be *(READ LIST)*?

G2. Which *one* should be the second highest priority?

ROTATE—START AT "X"	Q.G1	Q.G2
( ) a. Establishing tough standards	(44 (12-1	(45 (22-1
( ) b. Improving safety in and near schools	8-2	16-2
( ) c. Improving and expanding early childhood education programs including Head Start for pre-school children	26-3	35-3
( ) d. Strengthening parents' roles in their children's education	54-4	26-4
e. Not sure	1-5	1-5

G3. On the whole, do you think the *federal government* can play an important role in improving the country's educational system, or do you think it is too distant to be very helpful?

Yes, play an important role	(46 (63-1
No, too distant	36-2
Not sure	1-3

F. Factuals

F1. Altogether, for how many years have you worked as a teacher?

Mean = 17 |___|___| Years 00 = Less than 1 year

Median = 18 (47-48)

Not sure ... (47 (__-Y

F2. Is the area where your school is located considered inner city, urban, suburban, small town, or rural?

Inner City	(49 (13-1
Urban	10-2
Suburban	25-3
Small town	30-4
Rural	20-5
Not sure	*-6

F3. How many students in your school come from families whose income is below the average of the community – all of them, many of them, some of them, only a few, or none?

All of them	(50 (4-1
Many	44-2
Some	36-3
A few	14-4
None	1-5
Not sure	1-6

F4. How many students in your school come from minority families – all of them, many of them, some of them, only a few, or none?

All of them	(51 (	6-1
Many		27-2
Some		25-3
A few		37-4
None		5-5
Not sure		*-6

F5. Are you a member of a teachers' union, or not?

Yes, a member	(52 (	73-1
No, not a member		26-2
Not sure		*-3

F6. How old are you?

Mean = 43 |___|___| Years

Median = 44 (53-54)

Not sure	(53 (	__-Y

F7. Are you of Hispanic origin or descent, or not?

Yes	(55 (	3-1
No		97-2
Not sure		*-3

F8. Do you consider yourself white, black or African-American, Asian, or what?

White	(56 (	88-1
Black		5-2
African-American		3-3
Asian or Pacific Islander		1-4
American Indian or Alaskan Native		1-5
Not sure		2-6

That completes the interview. Thank you very much for your cooperation *with this Harris Poll. Now your opinion really counts.*

Time Ended: _____ AM/PM

FROM OBSERVATION: Respondent Sex

Male	(57 (__-1
Female	__-2

58-80Z

For More Information

Copies of The Metropolitan Life Survey of the American Teacher are available while in print, by writing to:

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THE AMERICAN TEACHER SURVEY
P.O. Box 807
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New York, New York 10159-0807

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18000054182 (493) Printed in U.S.A.

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